

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 15668 01 OF 02 172026Z

73

ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0465

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 15668

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PLAB, FR

SUBJECT: CGT CONTROL OF PUBLISHING BUSINESS

1. SUMMARY. THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE LABOR CONFLICT WHICH FOR THE LAST 100 DAYS HAS PITTED THE MASS CIRCULATION TABLOID "LE PARISIEN LIBERE" AGAINST CGT PRINTERS UNION STRIKING TO PREVENT MODERNIZATION AND POTENTIAL LOSS OF MONOPOLY CONTROL IN THE PUBLISHING BUSINESS WAS HEIGHTENED BY THE EXPLOSION OF TWO BOMBS THE NIGHT OF 12 JUNE. IN ADDITION TO ADDING TRAGEDY TO THE LABOR DISPUTE THE BOMBS EXPANDED ITS POLITICAL DIMENSION AND COMPLICATED FURTHER THE SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION. END SUMMARY.

2. ONE BOMB EXPLODED IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE OF BERNARD CABANES, AFP EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, WHO UPON HEARING NOISES CAME TO THE DOOR AT TIME OF THE EXPLOSION. WOUNDED SERIOUSLY HE DIED 14 JUNE, VICTIM OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY. IT IS GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT THE BOMB WAS INTENDED FOR

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PAGE 02 PARIS 15668 01 OF 02 172026Z

THE OTHER BERNARD CABANES, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF "LE

PARISIEN LIBERE".

3. THE SECOND BOMB WENT OFF IN FRONT OF THE HOME OF ANDRE BERGERON, FO SECRETARY GENERAL, CAUSING CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE BUT NO INJURIES.

4. ALTHOUGH THE EXPLOSIONS ARE SHROUDED IN MYSTERY SINCE THERE ARE NO CLUES NOR CLAIMS OF AUTHORSHIP, THERE IS VERY LITTLE DOUBT THAT THEY WERE INSPIRED BY THE PARISIEN LIBERE DISPUTE. THE BOMBS HAVE BEEN UNANIMOUSLY CONDEMNED AS INTOLERABLE CRIMINAL ACTS BUT THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE EVENTS THAT LED TO SUCH ACTS ARE CONFLICTING AND HEATEDLY DEBATED IN THE MASS MEDIA. IN OUR OPINION INTERIOR MINISTER PONIATOWSKI'S STATEMENT COMES CLOSER TO OBJECTIVITY WHEN HE RULED OUT ANY CGT RESPONSIBILITY, QUALIFIED THE EXPLOSIONS AS ACTS OF PROVOCATION OF "GAUCHISTE" ORIGIN, BUT AT THE SAME TIME CALLED ATTENTION TO THE INFLAMMATORY ACCUSATIONS (MAINLY BY CGT-PCF) AGAINST BERGERON AND FO AS "STRIKE BREAKERS".

5. CGT WAS QUICK TO ACCUSE MANAGEMENT'S REFUSAL TO NEGOTIATE AND GOF SUPPORT OF MANAGEMENT AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TENSION AND BY IMPLICATION OF THE BOMBINGS THEMSELVES. EXTREME LEFT WING SPOKESMEN AND PRESS ARE INSINUATING THAT POLICE PROVOCATION MAY BE BEHIND THE TWO BOMBS.

6. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT BOTH BERGERON AND FO IN GENERAL HAVE DONE EVERYTHING THEY COULD TO MERIT THE CGT WRATH SINCE THEY HAVE GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO CONDEMN THE CGT MONOPOLY CONTROL IN THE PRINTING BUSINESS. ACTING IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM OF WORK, FO RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO MANAGEMENT'S REQUEST TO PROVIDE THE PERSONNEL NEEDED TO CONTINUE PUBLICATION OF "LE PARISIEN LIBERE". AS A RESULT THE NEWSPAPER HAS BEEN APPEARING REGULARLY IN THE LAST 10 DAYS BY BEING PRINTED IN SHOPS IN CHARTRES AND IN PARIS. THIS FOLLOWED AN ATTEMPT TO GET THE PRINTING DONE IN BRUSSELS, ABANDONED AFTER A FEW DAYS BECAUSE CGT SUCCEEDED IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PARIS 15668 01 OF 02 172026Z

GETTING THE BELGIAN UNIONS TO REFUSE TO COOPERATE. FO PRINTERS, HOWEVER, ARE RAPIDLY LOSING THEIR ENTHUSIASM FOR THE JOB BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO WORK UNDER CONSTANT POLICE PROTECTION AND EQUALLY CONSTANT FEAR OF CGT RETALIATION OFF THE JOB.

7. CGT ATTACKS AGAINST FO AS "TRAITOR TO THE WORKING CLASS" REACHED A LEVEL OF SHRIEK WHICH HAD NOT BEEN

HEARD FOR OVER 10 YEARS. OBVIOUSLY CGT CONSIDERS
THAT THE STAKES ARE HIGH ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY A TEMPORARY
DEPARTURE FROM RESPONSIBLE DECORUM WHICH IT HAD OBSERVED
IN THE LAST FEW YEARS.

8. AS IS OFTEN THE CASE THE CGT ATTACKS WERE NOT WITH-

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PAGE 01 PARIS 15668 02 OF 02 172004Z

73

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 15668

OUT A POSITIVE IMPACT AS FAR AS FO IS CONCERNED. FIRST
IT HELPED DRAMATIZE FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC THE DEGREE
TO WHICH THE CGT CONTROLS ALL PRINTING IN FRANCE.
SECOND, PUBLIC OPINION REACTED WITH SYMPATHY TO FO'S
COURAGE IN CHALLENGING CGT AND ITS ATTEMPT TO LIVE UP
TO ITS COMMITMENT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. THIRD,
THE CGT VITUPERATIONS HELPTED FO TO CLOSE RANKS,
REASSERT ITS OPPOSITION TO COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY AND
ABOVE ALL REMIND THE RANK AND FILE THAT COMMUNIST
TACTICS AND GOALS HAVE NOT CHANGED SINCE 1948 WHEN FO

SPLIT FROM CGT. ALL THIS WAS DEMONSTRATED IN THE 6-8 JUNE MEETINGS OF THE FO CONFEDERATE NATIONAL COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF THE SECRETARIES GENERAL OF FEDERATIONS AND DEPARTMENTAL UNIONS. THE SPIRIT OF UNITY WAS DOMINANT AND THE COMMITTEE'S SUPPORT OF BERGERON UNANIMOUS AND COMPELLING.

9. AN IMPORTANT FACTOR BEHIND THE FOREGOING IS THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 PARIS 15668 02 OF 02 172004Z

PERSONALITY OF THE PUBLISHER OF "LE PARISIEN LIBERE", M. EMILIEN AMAURY. AS A TOUGH BUSINESSMAN, HARDHEADED MANAGER, BACKED BY THE SUCCESS STORY OF HIS PUBLISHING BUSINESS AND CONSIDERABLE FORTUNE, AMAURY HAS THE ABILITY TO WAGE BATTLE WITH ENORMOUS RESOURCEFULNESS. HE SEEMS DETERMINED TO SEE THIS FIGHT WITH THE CGT TO THE BITTER END, SOMETHING WHICH HIS COLLEAGUES AND COMPETITORS HAD DOUBTED AT THE BEGINNING. WHETHER THEY BELIEVE IN AMAURY'S CHANCES OF SUCCESS MAY BE ANOTHER QUESTION, BUT AT THIS POINT THEY SEEM TO REALIZE THAT AN AMAURY SUCCESS WOULD REBOUND TO THEIR OWN BENEFIT SINCE IT WILL RESTORE TO THE FRENCH PRESS A SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE OF FREEDOM HERETOFORE UNDERMINED BY THE CGT.

10. GOF, WHILE PROCLAIMING THAT IT IS FOLLOWING A HANDS-OFF POLICY, HAS SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERSCORE ITS OBLIGATION TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF THE PRESS WHICH AT THIS POINT MEANS POLICE PROTECTION NOT ONLY OF THE PRINTING SHOPS BUT OF THE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM OF PARISIEN LIBERE. GOF, HOWEVER, HAS GONE QUITE A BIT FURTHER BY GRANTING APPROVAL TO AMAURY'S PLANS TO LAY OFF 300 WORKERS, BOTH PRINTERS AND JOURNALISTS, IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT A MUCH NEEDED RESTRUCTURING OF HIS PUBLISHING BUSINESS.

11. COMMENT: THE STAKES ARE OBVIOUSLY HIGH AND THE PROTAGONISTS KNOW IT. AS A RESULT THEIR EMPHASIS IS LESS ON SCORING POINTS THAN ON AVOIDING MISTAKES WHICH COULD AFFECT PUBLIC OPINION.

THIS BEING THE FIRST TIME THAT THE CGT MONOPOLY IN THE PRESS IS CHALLENGED WITH SUCH DETERMINATION THE OBSERVERS ARE FOLLOWING EACH MOVE WITH KEENEST INTEREST. HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE PERSONALITY OF AMAURY AND THE EVIDENCE THAT GOF AT THE VERY TOP IS GIVING THIS CONTEST PRIORITY ATTENTION, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN LESS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE OUTCOME THAN WE ARE AT THIS 106TH DAY OF THIS "LABOR CONFLICT".
RUSH

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